

March 1, 2021

RE: House Bill 6517

To Members of the Education Committee:

**This is my written testimony and I will not be testifying at the hearing. My name is Kristen Stam and I live in Groton (Mystic), Connecticut. I fully support HB6517, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO ANALYZE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS GOVERNING DYSLEXIA INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING. I submit my testimony as a parent who has a student with dyslexia.**

My child has recently had her IEP updated because she is Severely Dyslexic and at this time, she is TWO years behind her peers for her grade level. I have known that there were reading issues with my child since Kindergarten, however, whenever I would question the programs used at school and how her progress was, I was told that she is progressing and that she would be assigned a level 1 intervention (reading specialist). At the end of Kindergarten, her report card noted that she would need INTENSIVE Assistance in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade with reading. Even though my requests were heard by the teachers, there was no additional assistance provided other than the original intervention. The programs being used did not change and my child memorized every story she was read, not truly reading anything.

Knowing that my child needed INTENSIVE instruction at the end of Kindergarten, and the main program the GROTON district is using to teach my child are not working (not a multisensory/evidence based learning programs) should have immediately been a Red Flag to start 1<sup>st</sup> Grade. Immediately at the beginning of the school year additional testing should have been automatically given. Unfortunately, no steps were taken proactively for my child until I had to request an adhoc meeting to address additional testing process. This request also came with resistance, therefor prolonging the needed services my child desperately needed. By the time all of the testing was to begin, we were struck with the Pandemic. Unfortunately, her testing was not completed until 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade. She finally has an IEP that is providing her with the necessary tools to learn to read, spell and do her math work. She is still 2 years behind her peers.

If the districts all had/have the appropriate multisensory scientifically based tools to teach their students correctly upfront as well as implement intervention as soon as an issue is apparent, then the number of students with this learning disability would be greatly decreased.

It is with a great sense of urgency that I respectfully request that you pass HB 6517. It is only through proper training and practicum experiences combined with the use and implementation of the evidence-based approaches that our children will be able to learn to excel.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Stam